

- (xii) Senior Officers of Department of Food and Public Distribution and FCI are frequently visiting wheat procuring States to personally assess the situation.

Procurement by FCI

3248. SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the official procuring agency, the Food Corporation of India, has not been able to procure enough foodgrains this season due to the entry of private traders offering better market prices than the official minimum support price (MSP);

(b) if so, the quantity of foodgrains procured by FCI in various places, so far;

(c) whether Government propose to offer market prices to the farmers to fulfil the targeted procurement quota by FCI; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) Since market arrivals of wheat in major wheat producing States was later than usual, procurement of wheat in RMS 2007-08 so far is less than the corresponding procurement in RMS 2006-07. 80.66 lakh tonnes of wheat has been procured by the FCI and State agencies as on 1.5.2007 against a quantity of 88.24 lakh tonnes of wheat procured in the corresponding period in RMS 2006-07.

The State-wise procurement as on 1.5.2007 is given below:—

(in lakh tonnes)

State	FCI	State Agencies	Total
Punjab	6.29	48.31	54.59
Haryana	2.82	22.33	25.15
U.P.	0.05	0.22	0.27
M.P.	0.01	0.01	0.02
Rajasthan	0.57	0.05	0.62
Uttarakhand	Negligible	0.01	0.01
Others	0.01	0.20	-
TOTAL	9.75	70.91	80.66

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Prices of essential commodities

3249. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:
SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the measures like export ban on wheat, pulses and sugar have done little to bring down food prices during the last one year;

(b) whether according to the Ministry, the prices have stabilized but prices had already climbed at an all-time high before it reached a plateau;

(c) if so, whether the price trend goes to show that the much-hyped export ban had little or no effect on domestic prices; and

(d) if so, what are the other steps Government propose to take to check the price of essential commodities in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA):

(a) Prices of wheat have generally remained steady in the last few months. Retail prices of sugar, which were in the range of Rs. 20-25 per kg during June 2006 in the country have declined and are ruling in the range of Rs. 15-20 per kg. as on 30.4.2007. Retail prices of gram dal have registered a decline at 4 centres in the country after the Government banned export of pulses.

(b) to (d) It is true that prices of certain essential commodities such as wheat and pulses have registered increase during the year 2006 owing to inadequate supplies relative to demand and hardening of international prices. Following several measures taken by the Government to contain the rise in prices, while prices of certain commodities have declined, prices of some other commodities have stabilized although at a relatively higher level. The ban on export of some essential commodities has helped in augmenting the domestic availability of these commodities. However, the exact impact of the ban cannot be quantified. Government has recently decided to import 1 million tonnes of wheat in suitable tranches by July,